



Pueblo: A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

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The U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot is located in southeastern Colorado, north of the Arkansas River. Encompassing approximately 23,000 acres, the depot's primary function is the safe storage and protection of 2,611 tons of mustard agent, part of the national stockpile of chemical weapons. These weapons, stored at the depot since the 1950s, are obsolete and must be destroyed.

The chemical weapons destruction program involves building partnerships and soliciting community involvement. One milestone in the public participation process has been the selection of the technology to be used in destroying the stockpile: neutralization followed by biotreatment.

Technology

On July 16, 2002, Department of Defense officials selected neutralization followed by biotreatment as the disposal technology to be used at the Pueblo Chemical Depot. Neutralization followed by biotreatment uses hot water to neutralize the chemical agent, effectively destroying the mustard agent molecules. The resulting hydrolysate is mostly water and thiodiglycol, a common industrial chemical that is readily biodegradable. Ordinary sewage treatment bacteria, or microbes, consume the organics in the hydrolysate. Besides being a common phenomenon in nature, the science of using microbes to help dispose of hazardous waste has existed for decades. Sewage treatment facilities across the country use microbes every day to help break down raw sewage.

The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

Located within the current boundaries of the depot, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant will include a variety of facilities for purposes including



agent processing, energetic processing, control and storage, munitions storage, biotreatment, entry control, utility, laboratory, personnel maintenance and other support tasks. The Bechtel Pueblo Team was awarded the systems contract in September 2002 to design, construct, systemize, pilot test, operate and close the facility.

The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, known as ACWA, is responsible for managing the destruction of the Pueblo chemical weapons stockpile and will oversee the Bechtel Pueblo contract. ACWA is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Public Outreach

The Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office and the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Office keep the community informed of issues regarding chemical weapons destruction. The offices respond to inquiries, provide information materials and coordinate guest speakers for a variety of different civic groups and organizations. The offices work closely with the Army, state regulatory agencies and local and state emergency preparedness authorities to create a comprehensive public involvement and outreach program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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